**ANG****Bayan**

Pahayagan ng Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas
Pinapatnubayan ng Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoismo

English edition
Volume XXXV No. 18
September 21, 2004
www.philippinerevolution.org

Editorial

The people shall shake the foundations of the US-Arroyo regime

The US-Arroyo regime callously carries out policies that further put the Filipino people through the wringer and impoverish them. It is the only solution that the pro-imperialist, antipeople and corrupt regime resorts to in the face of the intense economic and fiscal crisis.

The crisis indicates the further disintegration of the entire semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system presided over by the regime. Its intensification in recent years is due to the US-Arroyo regime's blind obedience to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in implementing the policies of liberalization, privatization, deregulation and denationalization.

These policies have wrought nothing but the massive destruction of productive forces, large-scale unemployment and tighter foreign control over the country's production and resources. They have given free rein to local and foreign monopolies in collaboration with the ruling classes to extract superprofits and exploit the people. The imperialist plunder of the country has grown more ruthless in the face of the worsening global crisis of monopoly capitalism.



Grave bureaucratic corruption within the Arroyo regime and the latter's prioritization of funding the fascist machinery and intensifying the "anti-terrorist war" against the Filipino people have further aggravated their suffering and oppression.

The regime is very desperately looking for a way out of the deep financial and economic crisis it is in. It is now in a mad scramble to raise enough funds to lift the system from its death throes by imposing a slew of new taxes. It will likewise allow relentless hikes in the prices of goods and services.

The regime further skimps on funds for basic services. It blocks the longstanding demand to raise the wages of workers and government employees. It lectures an already impoverished people on the need for belt-tightening even as the highest officials of the reactionary government enjoy extremely high salaries and benefits and continue to squander public funds.

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It is these same measures that will push the Filipino people to unite against the US-Arroyo regime's rule and spur a powerful torrent of protest. It will shake the Arroyo regime's hold on power until it withdraws plans of imposing new taxes and other hardships on the people.

The revolutionary forces are at the core of surging people's protests that will rock the US-Arroyo regime. They rouse the minds and raise the people's consciousness and their militant spirit. They enlighten them about the fact that they have no other recourse but to wage resistance to stop the ruling classes from further oppressing them. They demonstrate to the people the need to take action and thoroughly oppose the hardships inflicted by the reactionary government.

The crisis of the ruling system is so intense, it has spurred a broad range of people to wage resistance through various means. Even the national bourgeoisie are impelled to cooperate with the revolutionary movement to form a broad patriotic united front.

It is the revolutionary forces' responsibility to unite broad sections of the Filipino people against the Arroyo regime's pro-imperialist and antipeople policies. Conditions favor the establishment of a broad united front against the oil industry deregulation law and other laws that grant foreigners the freedom to plunder the country's wealth. It is likewise fitting to form a broad united front against anomalous foreign loans.

The aggravation of the economic crisis and the decline in the Filipino people's livelihood clearly demonstrate the need for revolutionary struggle to smash the present corrupt system and establish a new, progressive, independent and prosperous one. Thus, it is the revolutionary



forces' responsibility to use every opportunity to propagate and explain to the hilt, in villages, communities, factories and schools, the alternative program of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the National Democratic Front (NDF).

In the following months, the flames of people's protests will ignite all over. The cities' streets will be arenas of struggle for workers and government employees demanding wage increases and for ordinary folk opposing rising costs of petroleum products, electricity and water and protesting additional tax burdens and other hardships wrought by the US-Arroyo regime. The struggle of the peasant masses against large-scale landgrabbing and for genuine land reform will continue to surge in the countryside.

Simultaneously, the New People's Army (NPA) will continue doing its utmost to advance revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside. The NPA's tactical offensives against the armed pillars of the reactionary ruling system complement the people's struggle against their oppression and suffering in the hands of the US-Arroyo regime.

AB



Vol. XXXV No. 18 September 21, 2004

Ang Bayan is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English editions.

It is available for downloading at the Philippine Revolution Web Central located at:

www.philippinerevolution.org.

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Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines

Raise the struggle for a significant wage increase to a new and higher level

It is correct and absolutely necessary to reinvigorate the workers' struggle for higher wages. The call for a P125 increase in the minimum daily wage to reduce the wide gap between workers' wages and their families' actual needs is as correct and just as ever.

The struggle aims to avert the continuing decline of workers' purchasing power vis a vis the ravages of the economic crisis. Above all, it addresses the basic right to a human and decent life that capitalists in collusion with the ruling factions in power brutally violate and deny the workers.

It exposes the system of wage-slavery and opposes the unbridled exploitation of workers and all toiling masses. It points to the need for a national-

democratic revolution as the solution to the economic crisis characteristic of a semicolonial and semifeudal social system.

In chorus with its capitalist patrons, the Arroyo regime continues to stand in the way of a wage hike. In its past three years in office, there has been no significant increase in wages except for the small change granted by regional wage boards which were more of an insult than a help to workers. Worse, the regime now plans to revoke such minuscule wage hikes through new and additional taxes.

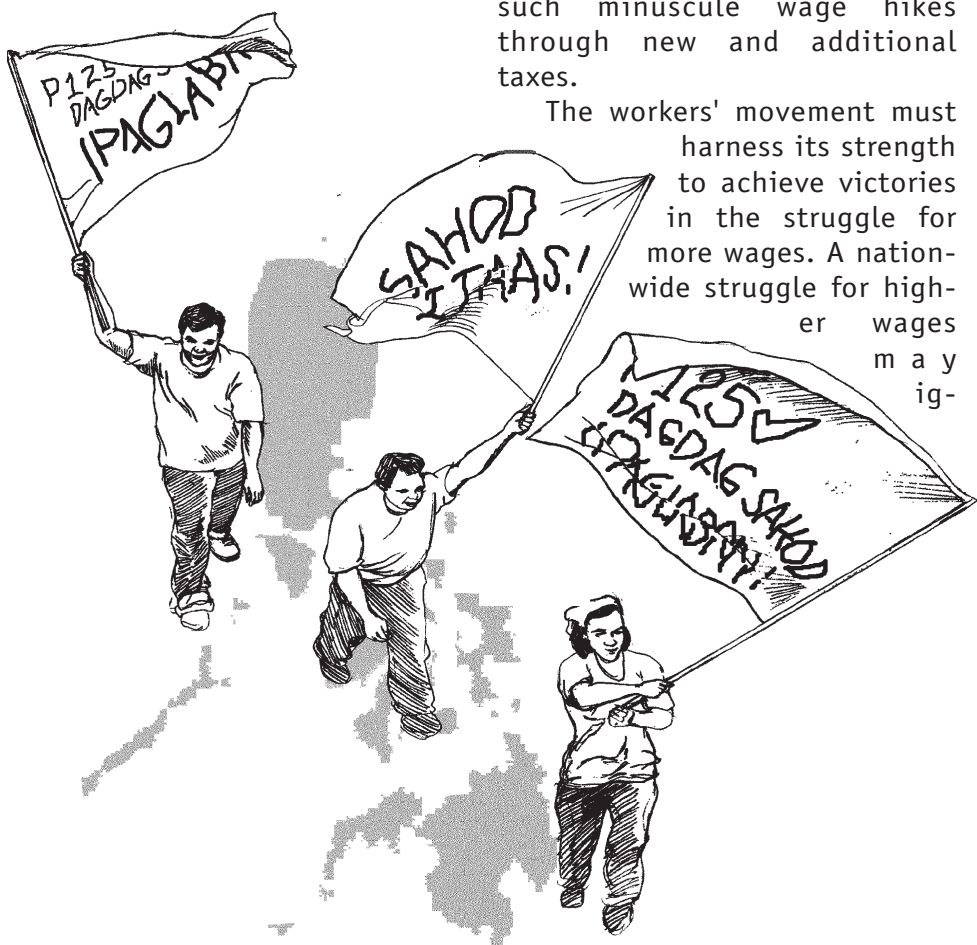
The workers' movement must harness its strength to achieve victories in the struggle for more wages. A nationwide struggle for higher wages may ig-

nite with the stronger unity of the various labor centers. Utmost effort must be exerted to strengthen workers' unions and organizations, especially in areas where there is a high concentration of workers. It is extremely important to smash the terrorism enforced by the state and big capitalists within enclaves and assert the right of workers to organize and express themselves in these areas. It is imperative to fight yellow unionism wherever it prevails. Due attention must be paid to communities of semiproletarians and farm workers as it is their unions and organizations that will banner the call to raise wages in their respective areas.

Together with the long-standing struggle for a wage increase, it is likewise imperative to continue to bring to the public's attention, major issues of the workers' movement such as rampant unemployment, contractualization and the suppression of labor rights. It is these campaigns that provide support and serve as the umbrella for local struggles and may serve as the central calls in the effort to expand and consolidate unions.

In this regard, it is extremely crucial to expose and oppose the devious and divisive maneuvers of yellow and counterrevolutionary elements. They claim to speak for the workers and offer all kinds of alternatives that actually dovetail the rationalizations of capitalists and the regime and derail the workers' struggle.

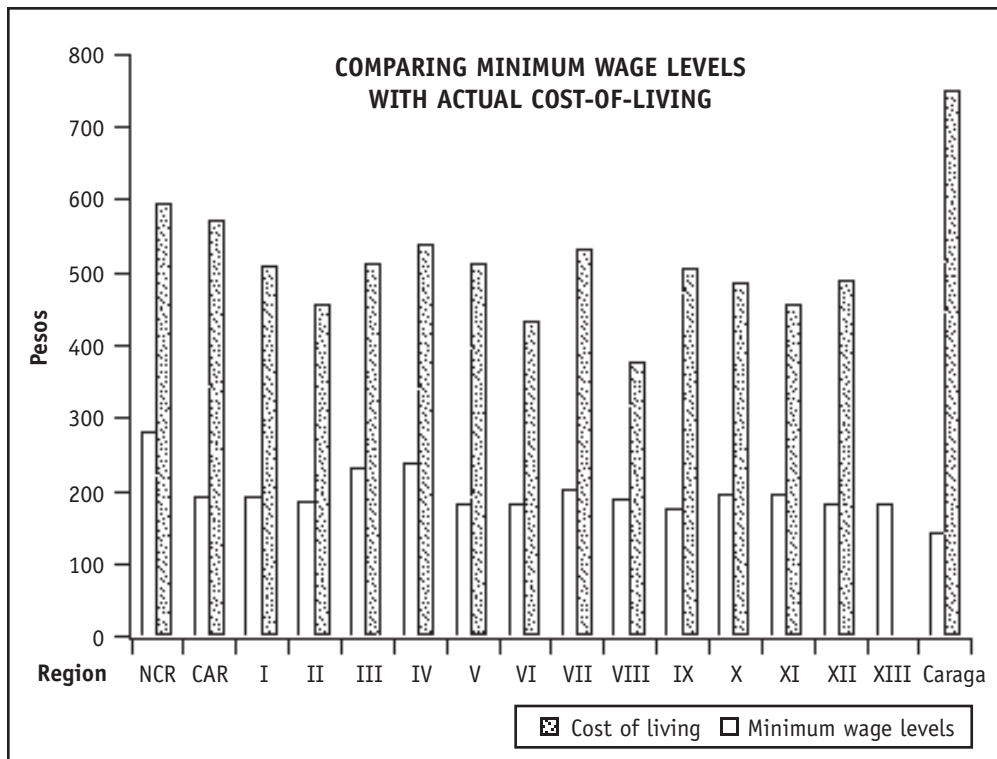
There is fertile ground for expanding the united front for



higher wages. The alliances formed by workers with democratic forces in the church, local governments and other institutions are sure to expand. Tactical alliances with sections of the ruling classes are likewise assured of expansion as the crisis of the entire ruling system rapidly worsens.

More than ever, it is important for the workers' movement to be at the forefront of the urban mass movement. The people's discontent and anger only await guidance and direction, especially at this point when the crisis and the regime's harsh economic policies cause so much suffering.

AB



Health workers demand P3,000 salary hike

There is growing support for government employees' demand for a P3,000 across-the-board salary increase. Thirty nurses at the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) led health workers in having their heads shaved on September 13 to protest their low salaries. Written over their shaven heads was their demand for a pay increase. Health workers also launched a noise barrage to put forward the grievances of the 3,900 PGH

employees.

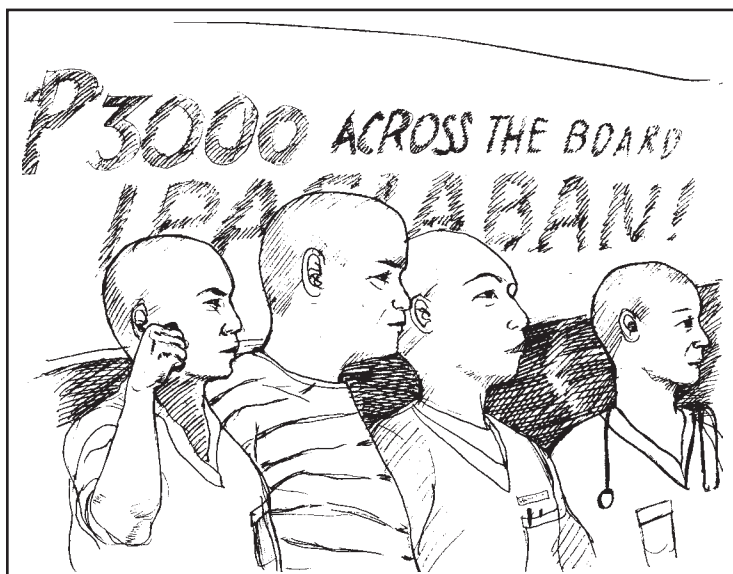
PGH is the country's premier government hospital, but an employee in its utility staff only receives a monthly salary of P5,083, which is even lower than the stipulated minimum P8,000 salary for Metro Manila. Nurses receive a gross income of P9,000, which is further reduced due to deductions for income tax, Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) premiums and Philhealth contributions, among others.

Doctors likewise receive low salaries. A resident doctor earns only P15,841 a month, according to an official of the PGH Physicians' Association. They are likewise hard up because as of November 2003, it already took P16,739.70 a month or P557.99 a day to meet the needs of a family of six in Metro Manila.

Health workers at the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center, Tondo Medical Center, Philippine Children's Medical Center and the Philippine Heart Center are also poised to launch protest actions.

Meanwhile, Rep. Rafael Mariano of the Anakpawis party filed House Bill No. 1064 calling for a P3,000 across-the-board salary increase for government employees.

AB



The revolution's policy on energy

The Filipino people have rightly demanded the scrapping of the oil industry deregulation law in the face of relentless increases in oil prices. Deregulation has been a bane to the people and has merely given foreign oil corporations complete freedom to raise the prices of their products.

Nonetheless, for as long as the semicolonial and semifeudal system exists, any gains achieved with respect to oil industry deregulation and increases in the prices of petroleum products can only be temporary.

It bears remembering that the root of the problem lies in the domination and monopoly control of imperialist oil companies. Therefore, the problem can only be resolved through the revolutionary transformation of the social system both in the Philippines and worldwide.

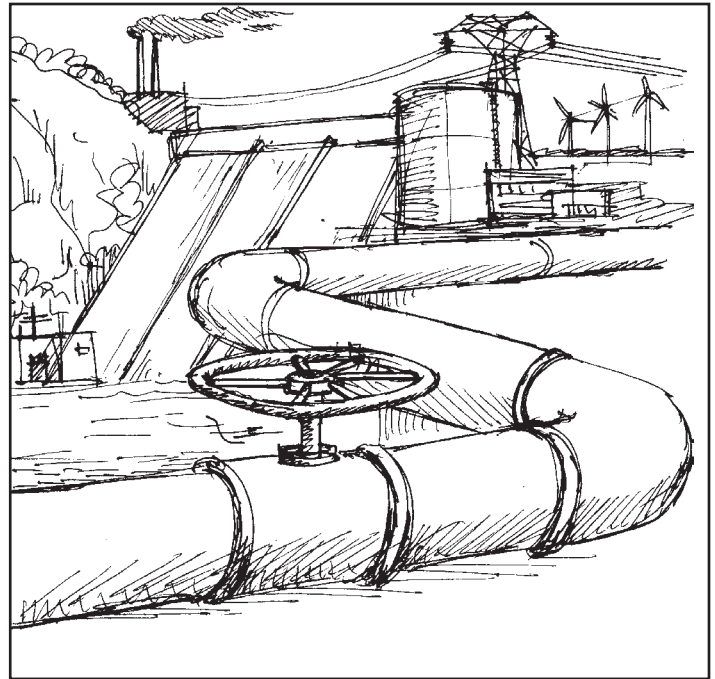
Only the program for a people's democratic revolution, which calls for the nationalization of the oil industry has such a perspective on this issue. Crude oil imports and refining as well as the distribution of refined oil

products will be centralized with the people's democratic state.

At a certain stage and for a defined period, these products may be retailed by private entities, but distribution will, for the most part, be handled by the state.

As to importation, the state will enter into agreements with countries willing to sell crude oil at the lowest prices.

As part of a comprehensive solution, efforts will likewise be made to wean the country from its total dependence on oil im-



ports by devoting sufficient attention and resources to searching for and developing local alternative sources of energy such as natural gas, hydroelectric power, geothermal power and nuclear power, among others. This is aside from exploration to discover local oil reserves. **AB**

Power rate hike looms anew

More burdens are in store for the people due to the National Power Corporation's (Napocor) unabated losses. Electricity costs are poised to rise anew aside from already relentless increases in the prices of gasoline, liquefied petroleum gas, food and other goods and services.

The Energy Regulatory Commission approved in September Napocor's petition for a 98-centavo per kWh (kilowatt-hour) increase in the price of the electricity it sells to power distributors such as Meralco. Distributors like Meralco and various electric cooperatives will in turn pass this on to their consumers. Thus, a sharp and dramatic rise in electricity costs is expected early next year.

Aside from Meralco, Napocor likewise sells electricity to the

Visayan Electric Co., Cagayan de Oro Power and Light Co., Davao Light and Power Co. and other electric cooperatives in the provinces.

The 98-centavo increase represents 40% of the price Napocor currently charges for electricity and is only half of what Napocor actually petitioned for. Napocor will be charging P3.80 per kWh in Luzon, up from the previous price of P2.57 per kWh. Prices in the Visayas will rise from P2.82 to P3.04 and in Mindanao from P1.80 to P2.07 per

kWh.

Those consuming 200 kWh in Luzon who purchase their electricity from distributors serviced by Napocor will have to shell out an additional P246 for electricity, while those in the Visayas will be paying P44 more and those in Mindanao, an additional P54.

Instead of addressing Napocor's basic problems like the large-scale corruption that has wrought losses to the corporation as well as price increases, Arroyo has made the much-vaunted but nominal move of ordering the Department of Energy to provide discounts to indigent consumers of electricity. **AB**

Severe graft and corruption in Napocor

Of the many government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) in the red, it is the National Power Corporation (Napocor) that is the most bankrupt, losing more than P166 billion in the past six years. It is expected to lose another P114 billion by the end of this year. In 2003 alone, its total debt of P1.3 trillion constituted 42% of the country's overall debt.

Napocor has incurred tremendous losses, not because it provides cheap electricity to the people, but because it has privatized its most profitable department (to sell it to foreign buyers) and its officials have been indulging in luxurious lifestyles.

One example is Napocor chair Rogelio Murga, who receives P107,000 a month, aside from enjoying other benefits and privileges. Murga's scandalous salary was exposed only this September. He has since been forced to tender his resignation.

Instead of reprimanding Murga for living it up and neglect-

ing Napocor, the Arroyo regime has even praised him for the "fine" things he has done for the company. One of them is a Napocor cost reduction program involving "streamlining" or the mass termination of workers and employees. Under his leadership, Napocor has reduced its workforce from 8,000 to 3,700. The company had a 13,000-strong workforce in 1998. The move is supposed to have saved the government P800 million.

But together with the much-vaunted austerity move, Napocor has spent over P10 billion for the retirement benefits of its high-ranking officials. Some retirees have moreover been rein-

stated, like former Napocor president Rolando Quilala, who is now the company's senior vice-president for corporate services.

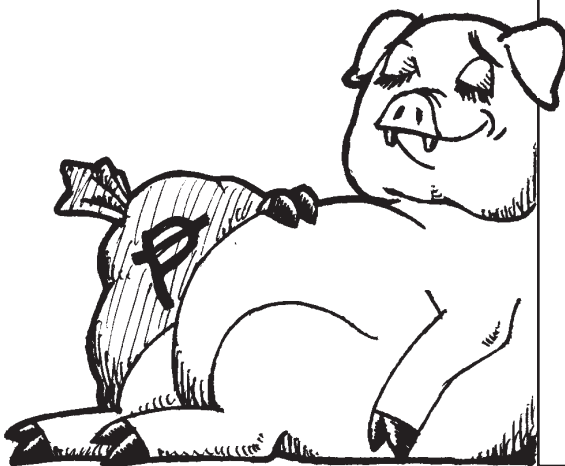
Despite the exposé of these anomalies, the regime has merely called on the corporation's ranking officers to institute "austerity measures" in line with the government's hypocritical campaign. The regime has made a show of trading barbs with congress on who should take the blame for allowing Napocor's officers to enjoy such exorbitant salaries. At the same time, however, it has defended the avaricious officials, rationalizing that they have merely been receiving salaries equivalent to those of their counterparts in the private sector.

At present, the country's overall debt stands at P5.4 trillion—P3.3 trillion of which was directly incurred by government, with the balance of P2.1 trillion consisting of debts by government corporations. But about a third or P1 trillion of the P3.3 trillion government debt actually consists of GOCC debts assumed by government.

Arroyo ordered in July the privatization of 70% of Napocor's generation assets within 18 months, saying this was the only way government could avoid the debacle of being saddled with debts it could ill-afford to pay. The regime has even been peddling the lie that the entry of foreign buyers into Napocor would bring down electricity rates as a result of competition. Arroyo has been irritatingly repetitive in drumming up support for privatization even though the people know only too well that it will result in spiralling electricity costs. **AB**

BANKRUPTCY IN NAPOCOR

1998-2003

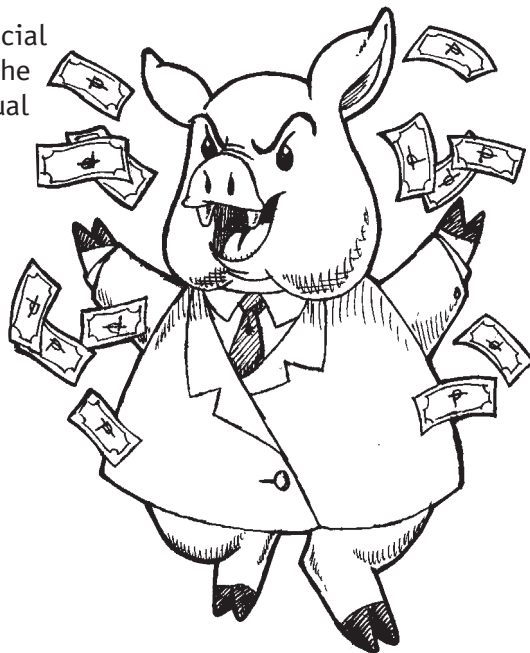


YEAR	AMOUNT
1998	P3.617 billion
1999	P5.95 billion
2000	P12.96 billion
2001	P10.4 billion
2002	P33.7 billion
2003	P100 billion

Shameless indulgence

High-ranking officials of GOCCs and government financial institutions openly rake in astoundingly huge amounts. The following is a partial list of these officials and their annual salaries:

- ▶ **Virgilio Angelo**, PCSO manager, **P6.5 million**;
- ▶ **Sergio Apostol**, PNOC chairperson, **P9.2 million**;
- ▶ **Lilia Bautista**, SEC chairperson, **P4.25 million**;
- ▶ **Rufino Bomasang**, CEO, PNOC, **P6.12 million**;
- ▶ **Thelmo Cunanan**, PNOC chairperson, **P6.05 million**;
- ▶ **Jesus Diaz**, LandBank EVP, **P3.56 million**;
- ▶ **Edgardo Garcia**, COO, DBP, **P7.48 million**;
- ▶ **Winston Garcia**, GSIS chairperson, **P5.6 million**;
- ▶ **Ricardo Golpeo**, PCSO, **P4.13 million**;
- ▶ **Rolando Geronimo**, EVP, DBP, **P5.5 million**;
- ▶ **Ma. Livia de Leon**, PCSO chairperson, **P9.85 million**;
- ▶ **Remedios Macalincag**, DBP president, **P6.29 million**;
- ▶ **Vivencio Macapagal**, EVP, DBP, **P5.28 million**;
- ▶ **Rodrigo Supena**, SVP, LandBank, **P4.06 million**



A conference of gains in Northeastern Luzon

Combat conservatism and surrenderism. Dare to achieve major advances. These were the tasks that the revolutionary forces in Northeastern Luzon set for themselves during the Party's second regional conference in 1999.

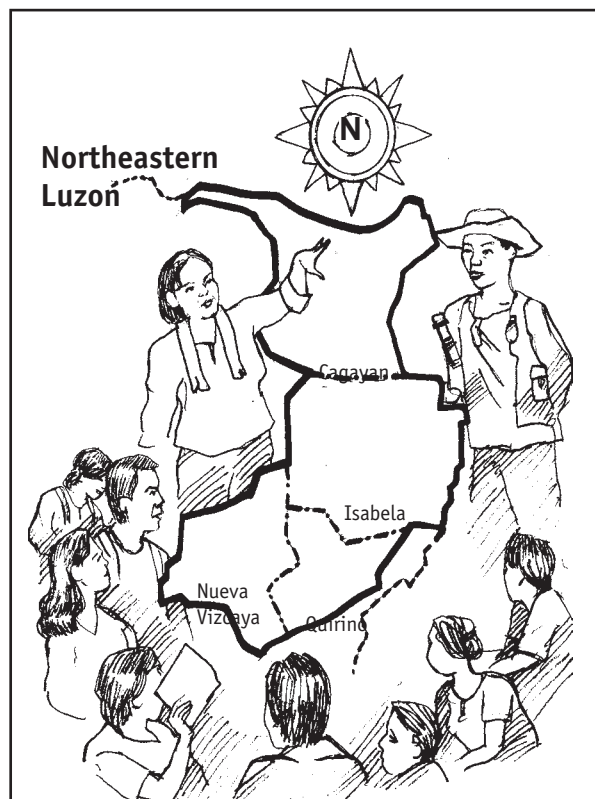
At the third regional conference in mid-2004, the Northeastern Luzon Party Committee was pleased to announce the successful implementation of the tasks set in 1999. The conference attended by 36 delegates and three observers was successfully held in one of the region's newly consolidated villages despite the presence of enemy forces scouring the area.

The conference also elected the region's new leadership, which combines the wealth of experience of senior cadres and the intense vitality of newer ones. It likewise stipulated the ever bigger tasks of the revolutionary movement in Northeast-

ern Luzon for the next three years. The new Three-Year Program's objective is to "accelerate efforts to enhance the region's capability to meet the national leadership's call to raise the level of people's war."

The objectives are founded on a number of significant accumulated victories. Even as the delegates mourned the death of some leading cadres and members, they vigorously applauded as the Political Report enumerated the gains that had been achieved. They were gains not

easily realized because committees within the regional Party organization first had to hurdle an intense two-line struggle even as the then small number of revolutionary forces faced the big-



ger and stronger enemy troops. But with guidance from the Party's national leadership, with the cadres and members' loyalty to the cause and their sincere desire to advance the revolution, and because conditions were extremely favorable for the people to launch militant action against oppression and exploitation, the revolutionary forces successfully overcame their conservatism and

uncertainty. The party committees firmly led mass struggles and the army units in military work.

According to the Political Report, Party membership in Northeastern Luzon tripled in the last five years. Local Party branches more than dou-

bled in number and the Party leadership was strengthened from the regional to the section level.

In 2003, all front committees led successful struggles against large-scale landgrabbing and for the reduction of usury. Prevailing interest rates were reduced by up to 50%. Farmgate prices for the peasants' produce were raised and fraud in the marketplace was largely eradicated in 350 barrios in 12 towns. Some 10,000 peasants in 200 barrios mobilized for struggles that benefited about 366,800 people or 55,000 families.

In 2004, electoral struggle and agrarian revolution were simultaneously undertaken to make each serve the other, and to oust a despotic provincial governor in the election. An antimalaria campaign likewise achieved positive results within

the New People's Army (NPA) and among the masses.

People in the region also tasted the sweetness of victory in the face of the grave hardships they have suffered, especially since they were also victims of warlord oppression and military repression. With the victory of mass struggles led by the Party, the broad masses of the people all the more recognize

the armed revolutionary movement's political influence in the region.

The number of consolidated barrios as well as villages targeted for expansion has begun to expand. There was a temporary reduction in number when

pendent squads were concentrated to constitute the platoon as the basic formation. Not only has the NPA's areas of operation expanded anew. Important towns were recovered, including those previously categorized as "unyielding." This experience has proven that there really was no such thing as an "unyielding" area so long as the interests of the masses are advanced. This is in contrast with employing "recovery by fire," which was used in the mid-1980s.

The mass base has doubled in size; the number of organizing groups, organized masses, organized women and youth tripled in number. The number of organized peasants quadrupled and the number of activists grew 12 times. The number of organizing committees grew 35 times. Scores of full-fledged mass organizations have been established,

when before there were none.

The NPA has more than doubled in size in the region. Before the assessed period, not a single tactical offensive (TOs) had been launched in four years. This time, all of the guerrilla fronts were able to launch TOs.

In the cities and town centers, it is the militant forces who are at the lead in struggles launched by the peasant and youth movements in the region. Because of the campaign against large-scale landgrabbing, the peasants have been able to achieve a number of gains in six large community clusters encompassing 36,579 hectares of land. Meanwhile, the progressive student organization leads the school council in the region's largest university, and continues to expand.

Overall conditions in the region are exceedingly favorable for the further all-sided advance of the revolutionary movement and achieving the objectives set by the recently concluded conference. To accomplish them, the gains from agrarian revolution and the electoral struggle must be reaped and the struggle of the people and their army raised to a higher level. More effort must be exerted to improve education and organizational work within the Party. The pacing of mass work must be accelerated and its level raised and intensified. Conservatism in military work must be thoroughly stamped out and army building and style of work improved.

With the continued perseverance of the revolutionary forces in Northeastern Luzon, the delegates' resounding applause will once more be heard as the gains that will surely be achieved are announced in the next regional conference. AB



Red fighters reap victories in Samar

Sixteen soldiers were killed and at least nine were wounded in a series of clashes between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the New People's Army (NPA) in Samar from June to the first week of August. Aside from launching tactical offensives, the NPA successfully defended itself against intense military operations during this period.

The key to these victories was the masses' broad and firm support for the people's army, said Jose Sumuroy, spokesperson of the Efren Martires Command of the NPA in Eastern Visayas. Oftentimes, said Sumuroy, it is the peasants themselves who alert the NPA about enemy forces they have spotted.

Three soldiers were killed and five were wounded after 80 soldiers attacked an NPA encampment along the border of Catarman, Northern Samar and Calbayog City, Western Samar on August 2. It was but the latest in a series of AFP defeats in the hands of the NPA. Prior to this, two soldiers were also killed in a firefight on July 11 in Barangay Cagdao, Silvino Lobos, Northern Samar.

On July 6, the NPA ambushed a unit of the 20th IB in Barangay Makatingog, Calbayog City, Western Samar, where two soldiers were killed and an undetermined number of troops wounded.

Two days before, combined forces of the 14th IB and 63rd IB had am-

bushed an NPA squad in Dolores, Eastern Samar. The NPA was able to seize the initiative and killed the 14th IB's commanding officer.

The Red fighters' victory during the clash in Dolores was a follow-through to three successive firefights between the AFP and NPA in Eastern Samar in June in which seven soldiers were killed

and three were wounded.

On June 16, the 14th IB, together with the 63rd IB, attacked an NPA unit stationed in a barrio of Maslog. Instead of inflicting casualties on the NPA, five soldiers perished in battle while two of them were wounded. Before this, the 14th IB and Scout Rangers had already assaulted an undersized NPA platoon in the same town on June 12. But it was the military that sustained one dead and one wounded in the firefight that they themselves had initiated.

Ironically, the two attacks in Maslog by the 14th IB were meant to avenge an NPA ambush on June 4 in Barangay Amantacop, Borongan that killed two soldiers and wounded another. **AB**



American soldiers face murder raps

VILLAGERS from Umapoy Island, Sipangkot ng Sitangkai, Tawi-tawi filed cases of murder and other human rights violations against forces of the AFP, PNP and a number of American soldiers in July.

The barriofolk said that combined forces of the US Army, Philippine Army and police assaulted the island on May 25. The American soldiers, who were armed with machine guns, actively joined the AFP and PNP in fir-

ing indiscriminately at the village. Eleven peasants were accused of being members of the Abu Sayyaf and were illegally arrested and detained. The peasants were tortured, with three of them killed.

Four American soldiers and elements of the AFP and PNP were charged before the Commission on Human Rights-Western Mindanao. There are also plans to have the case investigated in congress.

32 soldiers charged with murder and abuses

A SERGEANT and 31 soldiers of the 44th IB were charged with murder for the death of Bacar and Carmelita Japalali in a military operation in September. The case was filed on September 10 at the Prosecutor's Office of Tagum City.

According to Bacar's brother Talib, the Japalali couple was sleeping in their home in Sitio Talaba, Barangay Bingcungan on the night of September 8 when the military strafed their house, hitting the couple and killing

them. The military also fired on the neighboring house of Osmalic Ladia and Rosalim Padama. Japalali witnessed all of this.

To cover up their human rights abuses, the military in Southeastern Mindanao reported that the Japalali couple had been harboring New People's Army fighters. Earlier, they alleged that the couple was killed in a 10-minute encounter between the AFP and forces of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

President Arroyo assailed on 32nd anniversary of martial law

PROGRESSIVE organizations strongly assailed the US-Arroyo regime's repressive practices during their commemoration of the 32nd anniversary of the martial law declaration on September 21.

In particular, they criticized plans to impose additional taxes and the appointment of former military officers to key government posts. The protesters said President Arroyo was perpetuating certain repressive instru-

ments then used by Marcos, such as the "no permit, no rally" policy.

Some 1,000 members of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), KARAPATAN, Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, GABRIELA, Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) and Anakbayan marched to the Mendiola Bridge in Manila.

Mass actions were also held in the cities of Baguio, Bacolod, Davao and Gen. Santos.

Militants condemn Comrade Sison's renewed repression

DEMOCRATIC and revolutionary movements worldwide condemned the US government's renewed repression of Jose Maria Sison (Ka Joema). Invoking the fascist USA Patriot Act, the US government prevented Ka Joema from receiving royalties last August from his new book *Jose Maria Sison: At Home in the World—A Portrait of a Revolutionary*.

The book, a collaboration with patriotic multi-awarded novelist and journalist Ninotchka Rosca, is based on a series of interviews by Rosca with Ka Joema and his wife Julie de Lima in Utrecht, The Netherlands. Rosca began writing it after an assassination attempt on Ka Joema in June 2001. The project was delayed when the US included the CPP, the New People's Army and Ka Joema in its "terrorist" listing in August 2002.

The book contains Ka Joema's views and analyses not only regarding Philippine society and revolution, but on the perspective of the international anti-imperialist movement. It also serves as a biography of Ka Joema, who at the age of 65 has already spent 45 years in the service of revolution. The book contains an anthology of selected poems by Ka Joema, himself an award winning poet who received the Southeast Asia WRITE Award in 1986.

Rosca is a former member of Kabataang Makabayan and one of the founders of the Gabriela Network-USA.

NDF-Southern Mindanao condemns "Baker Piston"

THE National Democratic Front-Southern Mindanao Region (NDF-SMR) condemned "Baker Piston," a military training exercise involving American and Filipino troops ostensibly against "narcoterrorism" to be launched in Davao City and other parts of Mindanao. "Narcoterrorism" is the term used to refer to the involvement of so-called terrorist organizations in trafficking illegal drugs to raise funds.

In a statement on September 15, NDF-SMR spokesperson Rubi

del Mundo said that the US was only using the anti-drugs campaign to further its intervention in the Philippines, especially in Mindanao. In particular, said del Mundo, the US wants to strengthen its military presence in Mindanao to control oil and other natural resources in the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines corridor. The US also wants to pave the way for engaging the armed revolutionary movements advanced by the New People's Army (NPA) and the

Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF).

According to del Mundo, it is actually the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) that is the world's number one sponsor of "narcoterrorism." In the case of Colombia, said del Mundo, the CIA secretly collaborates with producers of poppy plants, from which opium, morphine and heroin are derived, but accuses the country's armed revolutionary groups of being involved with drugs.

War against Iraq illegal—Kofi Annan

UNITED Nations (UN) Secretary General Kofi Annan did not beat around the bush and declared with finality on September 15 that the war the US launched against Iraq was illegal.

Annan said the invasion carried out by the US-led coalition did not have the UN's approval. He said there were only two reasons acceptable to the UN for

waging war—when a country has to defend itself or when it needs to counteract impending aggression against it. Neither one existed in the case of Iraq.

In a related development, the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) finally declared that there were indeed no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The ISG includes some 1,200 American and British ex-

perts commissioned by the "coalition of the willing" to search for weapons of mass destruction supposedly in Iraq's possession, which became the justification to invade it.

Despite all this, US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair stubbornly insist they had legitimate reasons for waging war on Iraq.